UNITED NATIONS

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General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/45/PV.14
5 October 1990

ENGLISH

Forty-fifth session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOURTEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 1 October 1990, at 9.30 a.m.

President:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)
later:	Mr. SUTRESNA (Vice-President)	(Indonesia)
later:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)
later:	Mr. THOMPSON (Vice-President)	(Fiji)

- Ceremony for the presentation of the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by world leaders at the World Summit for Children [151]

- Address by Mr. Carlos Salinas de Gortari, President of the United Mexican States

- General debate [9] (continued)

  Statements made by

  Mr. Paasio (Finland)
  Mr. Tsering (Bhutan)

/...

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- Address by Mr. George Bush, President of the United States of America

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Levy (Israel)
Ms. Wilde (New Zealand)

The meeting was called to order at 9.45 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 151

CEREMONY FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE DECLARATION AND PLAN OF ACTION ADOPTED BY WORLD LEADERS AT THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR CHILDREN

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the ceremony for the presentation of the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by world leaders at the World Summit for Children.

I shall now call on the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Brian Mulroney, Co-President of the World Summit for Children.

Mr. Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. MULRONEY (Canada) (interpretation from French): On behalf of my Co-President, President Traore of Mali, I have the honour to submit a report on our deliberations this weekend.

(continued in English)

No one suffers more from poverty than children, and never has that suffering been more evident to the people of the world. Every day, 365 days a year, 40,000 children around the world die entirely preventable deaths. Millions more go hungry or are denied education or are abused.

READEX FICHE

(Mr. Mulroney, Canada)

Seventy-one world leaders came to New York this weekend to do something about the suffering that these numbers have come to represent. Yesterday's gathering of world leaders shed greater light on some of the world's darkest and most shameful secrets: child hunger and poverty, homelessness, disease, exploitation and illiteracy. We saw faces of joy as well as tears of pain in the video produced for the Summit.

(spoke in French)

We discussed issues never before on a Summit agenda - childhood diseases, family planning, the responsibility of parents towards their children.

No one who came to this Summit can be satisfied with the status quo. We all agreed that the problems confronting the world's children must be addressed urgently. The question is not simply that of poverty; many are neglected in affluent modern societies as well. We also found that the healthy development of children involves a number of aspects - economic, medical and technological.

(continued in English)

On a subject that lends itself so easily to generalizations, the goal of the Summit was to catalyse practical action by Governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and families - who will always have the major responsibility to provide a loving environment for the children of the world. The objective was to move the issue higher up on the policy agendas of all participating countries.

At the Conference, 71 world leaders, including leaders who will follow me to the rostrum - the President of Mexico, the President of the United States and others - endorsed a common Declaration and an important Plan of Action.

(Mr. Mulroney, Canada)

(spoke in French)

In the Declaration, they pledged to obey ten main principles covering all of the areas from immunization to clean water, touching upon planned parenthood and the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

(continued in English)

With the cold war over and the United Nations functioning in magnificent style, as its architects envisioned it would, with Germany uniting and the Soviet Union undergoing profound reforms, it is clear that humanity is capable of profound change and new directions. The lesson is that our past does not have to dictate our destiny, that new futures are possible if we set our minds to the task.

The endorsement of the Declaration and the Plan of Action this weekend was an indispensable step to bringing all Governments to act. It would be premature to say that the Summit was a success. The true success of the Summit will be discernible only in the years ahead, as nations implement their commitments and invest strategically in their most valuable resource, their children.

I have already been in contact with the heads of the major multilateral financial institutions and their response has been most encouraging. Already, the work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and other regional banks is shifting to complement the efforts of national Governments.

The World Bank's intention to increase its lending for primary care to 5 per cent of its total lending will mean half a billion dollars a year for primary education and basic health measures. This increase should make a most important contribution in improving the lives of children, particularly children in developing countries, who so urgently and desperately need the help not only of lending agencies but of every person in the Assembly today. By bringing the leaders of the world to a common determination to take up this challenge, the Summit

(Mr. Mulroney, Canada)

gives us all hope that child poverty and suffering will not always be with us. The Summit, largely a creation of Jim Grant and his excellent staff at the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has given the issue of children some important impetus. And now political will must keep the ball rolling.

It is my privilege to join with my Co-President, President Traore, in presenting the Conference Declaration to the President of the General Assembly. On behalf of the 71 world leaders who have signed them, we sincerely commend these documents to all of you, to all countries, to the United Nations and to its constituent agencies and to communities everywhere.

May I once again express the gratitude of all members, and that of the 71 leaders who participated, to the Secretary-General and his remarkable staff for their contribution, to Jim Grant and all the people of UNICEF for having made it such a marvellous success. My thanks to all of you.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Prime Minister of Canada.

It will give me great pleasure to accept the Declaration and the Plan of Action adopted by world leaders at the World Summit for Children.

Mr. Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: It is for me a source of deep satisfaction that my term as President of the General Assembly coincides with the holding of the World Summit for Children. The gathering this weekend of 71 Heads of State and Government to apply their wisdom, vision and political commitment to goals and strategies for the survival, protection and development of children throughout the world is a unique occasion. It signifies the determination to act in concert on behalf of the millions of suffering children, not only out of a feeling of compassion but as an expression of political will and regard for improving the human condition of children.

(The President)

In assessments of the Organization's achievements, the adoption by the General Assembly on 20 November 1989 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which came into force on 2 September, is generally recognized as a landmark event which embodies a comprehensive list of goals for the well-being of children.

I am convinced that the adoption of the Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children, along with a very specific Plan of Action, by the participants in the World Summit for Children will accelerate the ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

I should like to extend my warm congratulations to the six initiating Governments of the World Summit which, with the support of UNICEF, organized the Summit. I also wish to pay tribute to our Secretary-General, who provided the good offices of the United Nations in support of this historic initiative.

The well-being of children was the theme of the Summit. Let us seek to harmonize and renew our efforts so that we may hand on to the "succeeding generations", to which our Charter appropriately refers, a world in which starvation, disease, poverty and privation are memories of the past and not the inheritance of the future.

(The President)

During these last weeks we have seen the sovereignty and independence of a State abused. Every day we have heard the menacing signs of an approaching war. We are caught up in a struggle to ensure the observance of the rule of law in international relations and the need to maintain peace. May we, through the authority which comes from this, the most representative of all organs of our Organization, the Assembly of 160 nations, appeal to those who have the immediate responsibility in shaping the course of events, and perhaps of history, that there is no loss of face for any State in adhering to the Charter of our Organization, that there is no loss of face in the search for a peaceful settlement of a dispute. Nothing is lost in pursuing that goal. We owe it to our children not to add to the thousands who die every day from avoidable causes, the thousands who may die and the many who will suffer. We owe it to our children and to world peace. But it has to be a peace in freedom. This is our permanent plan of action as the collective responsibility of our Assembly.

In this spirit, I am pleased to accept the Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the Plan of Action.

I declare closed the ceremony on the presentation of the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the world leaders at the World Summit for Children.

We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 151.

ADDRESS BY MR. CARLOS SALINAS DE GORTARI, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the United Mexican States.

Mr. Carlos Salinas de Gortari, President of the United Mexican States, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the United Mexican States, His Excellency Mr. Carlos Salinas de Gortari, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President SALINAS de GORTARI (interpretation from Spanish): In addressing these words to the General Assembly upon the inauguration of its forty-fifth session, I bring a message of friendship and cordiality from the Mexican people. The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization for the past year tells of the new will and spirit of its Members, as well as the grave risks that still exist. I should like to underscore the praiseworthy efforts of Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, who has successfully used his talent for conciliation in resolving difficulties and in promoting a veritable rebirth of the United Nations. In Javier Perez de Cuellar, Mexico recognizes a conscientious emissary of peace.

I should also like to congratulate Ambassador Guido de Marco, who, as President of the General Assembly, will undoubtedly guide the work of this historic session to the successful conclusion our present circumstances require.

We welcome the Principality of Liechtenstein as a Member of our Organization. Mexico has always defended the principle of the universality of the United Nations; consequently, we hope that we shall soon be celebrating the entry of those States that still remain outside the system.

This is, in a sense, the house of the nations, a house built to foster the secure, civilized coexistence of all peoples. Today the life of the United Nations is attuned to the pulse of the world. I arrive here at a time of great readjustments and unaccustomed hopes. I come with the firm belief that peace and co-operation in the world are possible because they are indispensable. I come, moreover, with the experience of the changes occurring in my country, which stem

(President Salinas de Gortari)

from our circumstances and our determination but are closely bound up with the winds of world change.

Today we are experiencing an unexpected shift in history. It is a time of clashes between the past and the present, between what is global and what is local, between power and law. It is a time of imminent risks and also of opportunities that had not been expected in this century. Institutional structures, global balances and our very beliefs have changed. Over and above beliefs, geography and levels of development, there is a new general awareness that economies must be restructured and political practices must be modified in keeping with the new context of interdependence among nations. Today its most positive expression lies in a new attitude and new language used in dealing with what were once believed to be unalterable necessities. These final years of the century are marked not only by man's mastering of nature without harming it but also by the lifting of his spirit. Historic opportunities for building a future which must be common to all but which can also be more civilized and prosperous are opening for our generation.

This is not a time for complacency. Today, in the political sphere, we are witnessing the end of the cold war and we celebrate with great hope the active talks between the super-Powers. I recognize the courage and imagination their leaders have shown in escaping from the supposed inevitability that held the world trapped in folly and madness. For the United Nations, the new times have signalled the end of the Security Council's paralysis and the necessary strengthening of effective multilateral action.

At the same time, we see with distress that détente, and even co-operation, between Powers which follow different but convergent courses, does not guarantee the end of regional conflicts, nor encourage development in the countries of the South. Enormous amounts of resources formerly devoted to confrontation in Europe

(President Salinas de Gortari)

have no military purpose today. Will they remain mired in the routine established during the era of cold-war mentality? Will the great Powers be capable of redirecting their concerns and their resources towards the shaping of a world in which international law is the only barrier to the rule of force? Recent events have abruptly reminded us how illusory optimism can be unless we correct major imbalances, unless we have the will to abide by recognized law. Let us hope that the present day, when total war is being abandoned, does not prove also to be a time for the aggravation of inequalities between North and South and for the escalation of local conflicts.

(President Salinas de Gortari)

The economic sphere is dominated by new trends that are permeating cultures throughout the world. The interdependence of economies has accentuated global financial and trade links. We are witnessing an aggressive battle over quality, price and promptness in the exchange of goods and services. The imperative of competition is redefining the terms of production, social relations, and even family life. Never before has there been such great potential for development. But, as has happened on a number of occasions, there are also the lengthening shadows of unilateral actions, the danger of recession and the devastating impact of outside events on the best efforts and the most heartfelt desires of the developing nations.

The formation of economic blocs is shaping a new multipolar order. Those blocs could give a major impetus to global economic activity if they were to remain open to trade, with high levels of savings for foreign investment and lower world-wide interest rates. That scenario would support the programmes of adjustment and structural change of many countries. Such blocs may, however, look first and foremost to their own interests and raise new protectionist barriers, thereby increasing the imbalances in the international economy. Much depends on reaching a favourable conclusion at the Uruguay Round.

Faced with these facts and trends, the world today has realized that a nation cannot promote its independence by erecting walls or by isolating itself, whether for reasons of fear or reasons of nostalgia. Insularity in today's world is a very costly fantasy. To be late in entering global competition means delaying responses to social demands and putting the viability of nations at risk. But to weaken a people's awareness of its identity and throw into disarray its desire to govern its own affairs is even worse. Defending sovereignty in today's world demands deliberate direction of the internal changes that occur in a country if its people are not to suffer involuntarily the effects of world-wide change.

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Change affects everyone. We share the joy of the German people, which will soon live in a unified country. We admire the diligent efforts of the leaders who have demolished the wall of misunderstanding that divided families and split a single history into two branches. The unification of Germany, the other nations involved in the autumn revolution of 1989 and the new democracies in Latin Amer.a represent perhaps the most spectacular changes. But industrialized nations too are hastening to carry out changes that will enable them to retain their competitive edge, reduce deficits, streamline bureaucracies, expand their political rights and freedoms and gain access to new technologies. No country is so strong that it can ignore change, nor is any country so weak that it cannot represent an element of risk to the world.

We in Mexico recognize this new situation in the world. The prospect of population growth and the new context of international competition are the major challenges that Mexico faces. Our population now numbers 82 million, and over 1.5 million Mexicans are added every year. Historic deficiencies and grinding poverty exist side by side with a modern, diverse and demanding society. It has therefore been essential to ensure sustained and stable economic growth.

At the same time, we are adapting our political practices to provide a more sound basis for participation in the world that is currently taking shape. Mexicans will define their own role in the international context.

For several years the Mexican economy has been undergoing a process of adjustment aimed at achieving price stability and improving the efficiency of the production apparatus. The consistency of our economic programme has produced very encouraging results. We Mexicans have learnt lessons that we can never forget.

We consider it an absolute priority to maintain strict fiscal discipline, as the size of the public deficit defines the margins for action to stabilize the

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economy and carry out structural reforms. Mexico once had one of the world's most closed economies; now it has one of the most open. This transition to stability makes rapid trade liberalization and effective deregulation essential if we are to boost the efficiency of the production apparatus, bring domestic prices into line with those of other countries and stimulate technological change.

Mexico took the opportunity to negotiate a reduction in the servicing of its foreign debt, and this has made the country's prospects more secure. We also privatized non-strategic enterprises - doing so in stages - to maximize public revenues and secure the State's ability to meet its prime responsibilities. Mexico promotes foreign investment by permitting access to broader areas of the economy and by providing the essential legal security. Today new forms of association between Government and exporters are making it possible to penetrate and hold markets.

In our circumstances this path has led to a stronger economy and to a new, more productive and co-operative spirit in our society. The changes we have made have reached into all areas of our national life. Mexico is undertaking an in-depth reform of the State. Mexicans are changing their institutions and democratic practices. We have a more vigorous and competitive political-party system. Agreement between parties has produced new electoral legislation. We have created a better system to protect human rights and to combat drug trafficking and prevent offenders from escaping punishment. Rights are exercised freely every day. But the most important measure has been to channel a new social energy into the raising of living standards, mainly for those Mexicans who have the least even though they are making the greatest efforts.

(President Salinas de Gortari)

Mexico seeks to participate actively in all the economic blocs and to establish agreements that will enable us to secure new markets and attract new investment. At this very moment, my country is involved in talks with the United States on the signing of a free-trade agreement that will respond to the liberalization of our economy, facilitate access of our products to markets abroad, and settle any trade disputes between our countries in an objective manner. The inclusion of Canada in the agreement would result in the formation of the world's largest market. To the south, we are seeking to strengthen economic relations with the rest of Latin America and to lay the foundations for freer trade. Our new links with Europe and with Japan and the other nations of the Pacific should serve to increase our exports and attract investment and technology. This effort also makes us a bridge between the two oceans.

Mexico believes that the economic cohesion of blocs should not stem from a desire to protection against real competition. They are born of geography and culture, and their members should interact through increased trade and a greater knowledge of each other. Mexico therefore seeks to renew the cultural world of Latin America. Although shaped by Western tradition, we know that we are different because of the other cultures that have gone into moulding the Latin American identity. Our aim is to remove the barriers that impede not only the movement of goods and people but also the spread of the idea of achieving unity while maintaining each country's sovereignty.

The Americas astonished the world almost 500 years ago with the greatness of their native civilizations, the wealth of their resources and the creativity of their peoples. Today in Latin America there is a renewed spirit - a democratic and productive spirit, a spirit of justice and solidarity - that one day will again astonish the world. Mexico is committed to that future.

(President Salinas de Gortari)

There was a time, not long ago, when the language that prevailed at this Assembly was that of the crisis of multilateralism. All the wrongs of the world were recapitulated and, above all, stress was placed on the deficiencies of the mechanisms that existed and the weaknesses of the international community in righting them. This attitude always met with a deaf ear from some, angry reactions from others and impatience from everyone. That was an effect of the cold war.

Since the earliest days of the United Nations, and for more than a century before that, Mexico consistently expressed its support for respect for the right of nations to self-determination and non-intervention from abroad, for the legal equality of States and the peaceful settlement of conflicts as principles for civilized coexistence among nations: it has been a crusade in favour of international law. On occasion, our appeals - the only recourse available to a peace-loving nation - went unnoticed by those who adhered to power politics and rejected what they considered the naive politics of law. Today, we feel that the change in the world is proving us right. In the name of international law and its world-wide application, the cold war is disappearing and the community of nations is responding to the challenge of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

The Security Council has condemned the use of force, has taken measures to impose sanctions on the aggressor and to dissuade him, and has indicated ways to make those sanctions effective. Mexico has endorsed the resolutions of the Security Council and has already adopted, within its own sphere, the pertinent decisions for their implementation. We call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Iraqi troops currently in Kuwait, the immediate release of the hostages detained by arbitrary force, and full respect for the Vienna conventions on diplomatic and consular immunities for individuals and precincts. If the force

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of human rights is the most powerful idea of the modern era, invasion is the most consummate form of violating it. International diplomacy is here facing a new challenge.

The world has changed, and Mexico has changed as well; but the value of transformation lies in preserving gains which must not be relinquished. If reason, tolerance, co-operation and a sense of justice are regained through change, then change will have direction and depth. Since its founding, that has been the watchword of the United Nations: the abiding rule of law as opposed to the arbitrary will of the powerful; negotiation and reconciliation of interests instead of the use of force; consultation, concerted agreement and co-operation as means of settling differences, of mitigating conflicts and banishing war. The United Nations was an act of legal and political creativity, of culture and civilization against irrationality and barbarism. Change has shown us that we can be responsible to ourselves, to past generations and to those yet to come in a way the world has never yet known. We should not let this historic opportunity pass us by.

This is a representative forum or, to be more precise, it is the premier forum of world public opinion. Today, the General Assembly can also be the conduit of the new era of exchanges based on the principle of sovereign equality and in keeping with the norms of international law. Thus, it is painful to recall how many times in the past adopted resolutions have been ignored, and heartening today to see the norms respected. I come to this General Assembly persuaded that all Member States are committed to strengthening the process of recovery of the United Nations which has now begun. There is a historic mission to carry out, and today we are closer than ever before to accomplishing it.

We embark upon the decade of the 1990s beset by international uncertainties, but knowing that we have it in us to resolve them. The fundamental tasks of

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international law are those concerned with world stability, with the agendas of war and peace, of development and social justice in the world. The far-reaching changes have given a global character to potential responses to these major threats to the desire for productive and peaceful coexistence. The world-wide effort to eliminate the origins of conflicts again finds its firmest resolve in the establishment of law.

To a large extent, the danger represented by the regional conflicts that we are experiencing today derives from the arms race. Commitments in the field of arms reduction, particularly the reduction of nuclear and chemical weapons, and agreements for reducing trafficking in armaments, are key issues for peace in the decade of the 1990s.

There are encouraging signs. The Treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, and the understanding reached on a 50 per cent reduction in their strategic long-range nuclear arsenals are very positive factors. These have helped to create a favourable atmosphere for the European negotiations on the reduction of conventional arsenals, and have contributed favourably to an enhanced climate of détente. Respect for others, both within each nation and between States, is the political basis for negotiation and the underlying principle of international law. We call on all nations in our hemisphere and throughout the world to subscribe to treaties such as those of Tlatelolco and Rarotonga. Let us reduce the levels of conventional weapons and military budgets, and may the savings achieved thereby be directed towards development and not towards destruction.

The search for peace has led us to recognize concerted regional agreement as one of the most suitable ways of creating favourable conditions for negotiations. Central America, the pain-wracked isthmus of our continent, has been assailed by armed conflict and a draining of its economies for more than a decade. With

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respect for all concerned, Mexico has worked, first bilaterally, then multilaterally and subsequently through its present efforts within the Group of Rio and under the San Jose Accord, to bring the conflict to an end and to initiate a stage in which there will be development. Achieving peace in the region depends, first of all, on the tenacious efforts of the countries in the zone; the Esquipulas agreements are among the best examples of these. The Central American Governments are on the road to reconciliation and peace. They demand and deserve international support for their efforts. Just as resources were delivered to the warring parties during the time of conflict, they should now be provided to the Governments responsible for the development of the region. That is not occurring, and is alarming because the population dynamics and the age-old deficiencies of the region mean that there can be no lasting peace unless it is based on economic improvement.

Regional peace-seeking groups are irreplaceable. Efforts to solve the Cambodian conflict involve the resolute participation of the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other countries in the region. Progress in solving the problems of southern Africa have been based largely on the efforts of the front-line countries: the regional agreement is a gage of the processes leading towards peace. We expect the invaluable co-operation of the Arab League in finding a prompt solution to the problems in the Persian Gulf.

Another war of global dimensions is being waged against drug trafficking and terrorism, increasingly united in their criminal conspiracy against humanity. Here again, a new concept has been accepted that recognizes the true international nature of the problem and eliminates any pretext for not acting. It is a chain of terror that includes production, distribution and consumption as different parts of one and the same threat.

(President Salinas de Gortari)

Simultaneous measures must be taken to provide production options in places where drug crops are planted, to fight drug traffickers and to educate and rehabilitate those who consume drugs. The 1988 Vienna Convention against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and the preparation of a world plan of action are highly encouraging efforts. We trust that the new structure of United Nations agencies will effectively assist in multilaterally approaching this scourge.

In Mexico's case, drug trafficking not only threatens the health of our young people but also undermines national security and the strength of our institutions. In the course of my administration, Mexico has lost more than 100 people in this war, has arrested over 20,000 drug traffickers and has prevented 7 billion doses of marijuana and 3 billion doses of cocaine and heroin from reaching the youth of the world by confiscating drugs with a street value of $120 billion. Such is the depth of Mexico's commitment to the war on drug trafficking. It must not be forgotten, however, that the rule of law prevails in its fight at all times. We cannot allow rights to be violated when we wage this war, much less permit the sovereignty of States to be violated for such a purpose. Unswerving determination and full and respectful collaboration are the civilized solution, as they are in all questions of war and peace.

Lack of development and of social progress holds the same potential for disrupting global stability as have conflict and war. The highest hopes for this new age of multipolarity, an age characterized by respect and co-operation, will mean little if the promotion of growth and productive employment to reduce poverty is nullified by protectionist barriers, negative terms of trade and the net transfer of the South's resources to the industrialized world. The grievous and widening gap between rich and poor countries is a source of concern to all.

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World-wide environmental deterioration and pollution jeopardize social development and undermine the productive endeavours of our nations. This problem, whose origin and consequences extend across national frontiers, demands a multilateral solution.

Development and environmental protection are compatible if all of us accept our responsibility for the environment and if the necessary resources and technologies are channelled to the developing countries to enable them to offer their inhabitants options that do not despoil the environment. Norms of coexistence that did not include the developing nations in the building of prosperity would ignore the international community's reason for existence and waste the benefits of peace. The 1992 world Conference on Environment and Development should be a turning-point in the firm commitment of the community of nations to alleviate the harmful effects of environmental deterioration.

Mexico is doing its part and is seeking to balance its industrialization with a healthy environment. We are protecting whales, dolphins and a dozen of the world's remaining 14 species of sea turtles that lay their eggs on our beaches. We are providing more protection for our tropical forests and are actively participating in the world strategy for preventing changes in the global climate. We seek more co-operation, especially financial and technological co-operation, in attacking the problems of pollution in Mexico City. This is a struggle in behalf of civilization, the civilization that will come after us, which we cannot abandon without rejecting our own nature.

In the midst of the immense chaos that the French Revolution caused in Europe two centures ago, in a world suddenly left without points of reference and threatened by new forms of despotism, a philosopher of that age and of all ages enthusiastically but cautiously distinguished between universal law, the promise

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of everlasting peace among nations and respect for the freedom of all. Today, when the end of the cold war is changing the world's geopolitics, when the people of Eastern Europe are once again finding the magnificence and the risks of freedom and when, at the same time, the danger of a war with unprecedented consequences is emerging and new problems are gaining priority, we must return to the principles of that centuries-old perception.

What should the future of our Organization be? The circumstances that favour the strengthening of the United Nations demand responsibility. The momentum of these times bears with it the risk of tempting us to act in haste, to create functions for the United Nations that go beyond the provisions of its Charter, functions that not all of its Member States are willing to undertake. Let us, therefore, reflect on our present condition, so that we can envisage a future that, while not free from problems, will have common rules for resolving them.

What cannot be put off is the implementation of the fundamental principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, which are Mexico's principles as well. The interdependence of the modern world and the conviction that there are global problems whose solution can be attained only through international action have led some to cast doubt on the validity of those principles. That is an erroneous view; the most progressive forms of international organization that have emerged in recent times have had as their point of departure the twin rights of territorial integrity and political sovereignty. That is where the ultimate legitimacy of the Organization resides, and that is what offers the possibility of achieving agreements aimed at constructive and effective international action. States are the arena of self-determination, and only through respect for them is international determination possible.

(President Salinas de Gortari)

The challenge of our times is to recognize that the trend towards globalization demands the effective application of international law to establish the rules governing co-operative efforts in the face of problems that, by their very nature, are international. But this should never mean a weakening of the sovereignty of States on the pretext of a supposed world community of individuals. Let us not repeat the mistake of establishing a universal rationale aimed at wiping away the history of peoples.

It is possible for us to view the world as an entity only because we hold a point of view, our own, that of each nation. That is why our attachment to values, to history, to culture, which is the cement of societies, persists and indeed is growing stronger. Sovereignty and democracy are essential in a world of interdependence. Only thus will self-government serve to make commitments, forge links and be open to the community of nations. Only a real détente can lead to genuine changes.

The lawful defence and promotion of the sovereign interrelationship of nations does not conflict with the certainty of national identity but rather requires it. The scale of the world's great problems can no longer be used as a pretext for practising new forms of interventionism and hegemonism. To each citizen, each family and each society, forming part of a political community is something of decisive value. Only those that are sovereign agents respected by the international community can be participants in international affairs. In the words of Mexican internationalist Genaro Estrada:

"No country should ask for something which the sovereignty of its own people gives it the right to receive."

(President Salinas de Gortari)

Uncertainty can cause fear, but it can also give rise to unexplored opportunities. More than ever before, the current situation offers unique conditions for constructive encounters between nations. In order to take advantage of this, we must cast aside our fear of the unknown. The effective protection of nations requires giving free rein to their capabilities, not limiting them. It means interacting and reaching agreement, not responding unilaterally. It means having confidence in ourselves so that we may take an active part in shaping world history, which is one and the same and belongs to all. Are we prepared to give politics and diplomacy a chance to work, despite their limitations, their slow results, their unavoidable but indispensable commitments?

In this regard the universal democratic idea is the great legacy of these last years of the century. Fragile though it is, it is being built throughout the world in the face of waning but still dangerous resistance. The democratic idea reflects the complexity of present-day societies: agreement between different men and women who wish to live as a productive community under democracy; respect for their dignity and for their basic rights; the sum of talents that are free and capable of facing global challenges. In a sense a new utopia, richer than any that preceded it, is emerging, born of a true confrontation between doctrinaire principles and historical facts. If the twentieth century were to leave us only this legacy, it would be making its full contribution to mankind. For all nations, however, there is still a long way to go, and the ideal is still far from becoming a reality.

World justice must become the heritage for the twenty-first century. Our passion for democracy must take into account the need to bring into being the conditions that make it possible to exercise political and civil rights, enabling them to flourish and make men brothers in spirit. Beyond any doubt, the initial

(President Salinas de Gortari)

effort must be internal, national and continuous. But it also calls for the participation of the international community, through its institutions, in support of the hardships suffered by entire peoples in their efforts to achieve more prosperous lives.

International law will thus become all the more relevant, because the interrelationship of interests and the globalization of political values will necessarily lead to the joint solutions of common problems. The unquestionable link between development and peace makes it necessary to pursue dialogue and to act in accordance with the law.

Mexico has maintained and will always maintain a firm commitment to a policy of principles. We believe in law as the foundation of a culture of respect among nations. We believe in democracy as a measure of peoples' own will. We seek a more deeply rooted justice, both within our country and among nations. It cannot be otherwise, because it is our conviction, rooted in our history and our geography, that the international principles of Mexico and the United Nations do indeed constitute a framework for action that better promotes our interests. Law ultimately constitutes an objective barrier - although unfortunately not an insurmountable one - to the arbitrary exercise of power.

The United Nations is the most nearly perfect form of political organization for the sovereign interrelationships of States. As the interdependence among States increases, so too will the need to move forward to more effective levels of organization. May the task of the United Nations for the twenty-first century be to establish democratic justice in the world.

The most important events in history have always been the result of achieving something previously regarded as impossible. It would be futile to attempt to place limits on the progress of free men, but it would be even more futile to try

(President Salinas de Gortari)

to place constraints on the effects of the commitment to act with goodwill. Today in the United Nations we have a world Organization that gives full priority to respect for international law and the principles of its founding Charter, an Organization that guarantees the search for solutions to the global problems of our time and that upholds the indissoluble link between peace and development. In short, we have an Organization that promotes respect as one of the founding principles of democracy and of open, equitable co-operation to make international justice a reality. This is the only way to find hope for the world.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the President of the United Mexican States for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Carlos Salinas de Gortari, President of the United Mexican States, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. PAASIO (Finland): I take great pleasure in seeing you, Sir, a distinguished representative of the Republic of Malta presiding over this session of the General Assembly. Finland has been in close co-operation with Malta both in Europe and in the United Nations. We know that our countries share fundamental convictions about world order and world organization. I wish you every success in your responsible task. I wish to take this opportunity also to thank your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Garba of Nigeria, for the outstanding services he rendered to the General Assembly during the last session.

In Europe the year 1989 will be remembered as a year of momentous change and a breakthrough of popular will. The year 1990 has been a year of consolidation and of elections confirming the course of change. We welcome these developments. We welcome in particular the spirit of freedom and democracy that has animated peaceful change both in Europe and elsewhere.

It is all the more tragic that mankind in 1990 has had to witness a singularly blatant act of aggression by Iraq against Kuwait. Therefore the year 1990 has for the United Nations become a year of collective action in the face of aggression. The international community has shown solidarity and determination in applying the sanctions mandated by the Security Council because of the occupation of Kuwait.

The response by the United Nations represents great progress in the ability of the world Organization to live up to its ideals and act in defence of the freedom, sovereignty and integrity of one of its Member States.

Finland is strongly of the view that political problems everywhere must be solved peacefully and that social and political change also must come about peacefully. This principle applies to the Middle East, to the Persian Gulf and to other crisis areas just as well as to Europe.

(Mr. Paasio, Finland)

Europe is heading towards a new existence, without confrontation and without the cold war. We are not yet sure what the new Europe will be like in all its details; but we trust that it will offer all its inhabitants opportunities to live in dignity and freedom without discrimination and without fear.

What is sure and, indeed, gratifying is that Germany will be unified the day after tomorrow. German unification will be an essential building block in the new undivided Europe within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). A milestone in this process will be the summit of the CSCE countries to be held in Paris in November.

Much remains to be done in order to meet the aspirations of the peoples of Europe. At the same time, the new Europe cannot be oblivious of the needs of the rest of the world. On the contrary, Europe needs all the other continents, and Europe must be open to all of them.

The building of a new structure of peace in Europe is under way, but the underlying ideas and principles are already in place. In fact they are in evidence right here in this Organization, for they are universal. The new process in Europe flows directly from the principles of national self-determination, political freedom and social justice.

We believe that there are important lessons to be drawn from the recent events in Europe. First of all, it has become clear that the ideas of freedom, democracy and human rights are so powerful that sooner or later they will reassert themselves. This does not mean that mankind is thereby brought to the end of history, as some have claimed. There are important and difficult challenges to face both in individual countries and in co-operation on a global scale.

Secondly, the abandonment of the totalitarian régimes in a number of European and other countries also helps enhance international confidence and security. The

(Mr. Paasio, Finland)

easing of the military confrontation is well under way in Europe. In the long run, this should make it possible to devote growing resources to other pressing needs instead of armaments.

Thirdly, an emerging awareness of global priorities seems to have been prominent in the dynamic movement for change. This is important for the new directions that must be given to international co-operation in the nineties and beyond.

This new awareness is strongly felt in Europe, but it is in fact global, present in all parts of the world. This very awareness moved the General Assembly five months ago to agree unanimously on the Declaration of International Economic Co-operation. It is one of the forces driving the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to take place in Brazil in 1992. The idea of sustainable development should now direct the preparatory work for that Conference as well as the preparations for the new international development strategy which will be formulated by the General Assembly during the present session.

(Mr. Paasio, Finland)

The problems that will be on the agenda of the 1992 Conference require urgent action by Governments. They require action now and they require long-term policies. I am thinking, for example, of policies to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other substances that have a direct impact on the climate of the Earth as a whole.

For decades Governments have rallied to the idea of development, and development has been interpreted largely as the combination of growth and change - sometimes maybe only as growth of the gross national product. Today, we know that a more comprehensive concept is needed. We welcome the combined emphasis on environmental protection and development in the preparations for the 1992 Conference, for in the long run, one is not possible without the other. We welcome, too, the emphasis on human development, which should lead to freedom from disease, ignorance and political repression.

However, it is more and more difficult to envisage how the resources of the Earth can sustain a steadily growing world population. Human development and dignity cannot be achieved with the present rates of population growth. All individuals should be able to enjoy equally the benefits of development, human rights and peace.

In this general debate it is not enough to speak only about general trends and global challenges. Some specific issues and problems must also be addressed.

Let me first express my country's satisfaction at the continuing trend towards universality of membership in the United Nations. Less than two weeks ago, we welcomed the most recent Member State, the Principality of Liechtenstein, a country with which Finland has closely collaborated in the process of advancing security and co-operation in Europe.

(Mr. Paasio, Finland)

This year, we have also welcomed the Republic of Namibia as a Member of the United Nations. Namibia's independence - after a long process culminating in free and fair elections - bears witness to the ability of the United Nations to promote peaceful change. Namibia's Constitution based on pluralism could serve as a model for other countries in Africa and elsewhere.

More attention will now be focused on South Africa where far-reaching political change is called for. We recognize the real change that has already taken place in South Africa. The measures taken to remove some parts of the apartheid system are steps in the right direction, and we welcome them. We are encouraged by the assertions of the South African Government that the process of change is irreversible.

Guided by their commitment to a peaceful process of negotiation, the Government of South Africa and representatives of the majority population should now lay the basis for giving all South Africans, regardless of the colour of their skin, a common responsibility, a common stake in the future of their country. As avenues to peaceful change are being opened, there is a concomitant need for all to renounce violence as a means of dealing with South Africa's pressing problems. The dialogue should help to build confidence and overcome fear. Progress will require mutual moderation as well as mutual understanding.

Finland keeps the situation in South Africa under close and constant review. We do not regard it as opportune to lift the sanctions that Finland imposed on South Africa some years ago in accordance with the Nordic programme of action against apartheid, since apartheid is still there. In recognition of the change that has occurred we have, however, modified the guidelines concerning the issuance of visas to South African citizens. Thus, we want to facilitate contacts that may contribute to further dialogue in South Africa. If the reforms in South Africa

(Mr. Paasio, Finland)

continue as we hope they will, we shall review other Finnish policies towards South Africa accordingly.

There is one region in the world which is not yet a part of the trend towards peaceful political change - the region of the Middle East.

Every State Member of the United Nations is now affected by the aggression against Kuwait and its occupation which has continued since the beginning of August. Every Member State is engaged in our common efforts to dislodge the aggressor and achieve a complete withdrawal of Iraqi forces from the occupied country. One cannot but be concerned at the fate of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians, of both Kuwaiti and other nationalities, many of them fleeing in a state of destitution and panic, as well as at the shocking news that is seeping out from occupied Kuwait itself.

All of this shows that international efforts to end the occupation are not enough. Solidarity and generosity are required of all of us, both to help the suffering people and to re-establish order and well-being.

Finland's own experience tells us that we must work, above all, for the strengthening of the principles of international law which protect the interests of all nations, in particular those of the small ones. Respect for these principles is essential for our own existence and independence. The independence and integrity of Kuwait are matters of vital importance to Finland.

If necessary, the United Nations should not shrink from taking further steps to overcome aggression and uphold the principle of collective security.

The search for international peace and security has also prompted Finland to serve the United Nations elsewhere in the Middle East where the need for peace, stability and the end of occupation is no less urgent. The tension in the region

(Mr. Paasio, Finland)

is also continuously experienced by almost 1,000 Finnish soldiers, on duty as peace-keepers for the United Nations. Here the world has already waited too long for decisive steps to be taken from peace-keeping to peace-making.

It is clear to us that Israel and the Palestinians must live peacefully as neighbours with full respect for the rights of each other, including, of course, the right of Israel to exist within secure and recognized borders, as well as the right of the Palestinians to national self-determination. The well-known resolutions of the Security Council must be implemented. The road to progress may include elections, negotiations and an international conference of all interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The present policies of Israel in the occupied territories have exacerbated the situation instead of laying the basis for progress towards a comprehensive political settlement.

This Organization was created in order to help nations change themselves and the world peacefully. That is still the aim of the United Nations. That is the kind of change I have spoken about and welcomed today. At the same time, we are committed by the Charter not to tolerate change imposed by violence. These are the two challenges now facing the United Nations. Let us meet them together.

Mr. TSERING (Bhutan): I have the honour to convey to you, Sir, and through you to all representatives the warm greetings and good wishes of His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, King of Bhutan, for the success of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

I should like to take this opportunity to extend to you the warm congratulations of my delegation on your election to the presidency of this session of the General Assembly. Given your wisdom and experience, I am confident that you will guide our deliberations to successful conclusions. I should also like to put on record our appreciation for the skilful manner in which Mr. Joseph N. Garba conducted the proceedings of our last session.

The comprehensive and incisive annual report of our Secretary-General deserves our highest commendation. People all over the world have witnessed with gratification the potential of the United Nations and the realization of the high hopes they place in it. That renaissance of consciousness in the Organization is in large measure due to the unrelenting efforts of the Secretary-General and his senior colleagues in the United Nations system.

We are indeed living in challenging times. The rolling tide of change has reached unprecedented heights. Physical walls that divided peoples and nations have been reduced to rubble. Ideological barriers have been dismantled. Mistrust and hatred have given way to understanding and co-operation. Years of hostility between the super-Powers and their allies have ended. A truly new epoch has begun in their bilateral relations. In a remarkably short span of time, the world has seen an irreversible trend towards reconciliation between nations that not very long ago were bitter foes. We must encourage that growing trend towards reconciliation to ensure enduring global peace and progress.

(Mr. Tsering, Bhutan)

The recent changes of historic proportion have led to an unprecedented integration of Europe. The unification of Germany, which we heartily welcome, has become a reality. We are confident that a strong and united Germany will make valuable contributions to Europe and the world. All this has opened up new opportunities for growth and development in the world. The positive fallout of the improved super-Power relations is also evident in the narrowing of differences in many regional conflicts and, in some cases, in their resolution.

Namibia is one telling example. Its independence and accession to membership of the United Nations early this year were the logical culmination of the long-drawn-out struggle against colonialism. Even in South Africa, a new beginning has been made. The release of Nelson Mandela has effectively set in motion the inevitable process towards freedom, equity and justice. We hope the commencement of negotiations for a new constitution embracing power-sharing will soon lead to the establishment of a united, non-racial South Africa. Until such time as apartheid is abolished and a representative government assumes office, my delegation supports the continuation of economic sanctions.

The spirit of growing co-operation in international relations is evident in the fact that the five permanent members of the Security Council are joining hands to end the Cambodian tragedy. We appreciate their initiative and the efforts of the Association of South-East Asian Nations in the search for a lasting solution to the Cambodian problem. The framework defining key elements for a comprehensive political settlement agreed to by the five permanent members and subsequently endorsed by the concerned parties as the basis for settling the problem during the Jakarta Meeting gives cause for optimism. We welcome the establishment of the Supeme National Council as a prelude to restoring the country's independence and territorial integrity under a truly representative government.

(Mr. Tsering, Bhutan)

The situation in Afghanistan is being viewed with realism. The internal in-fighting resulting from the interplay of outside interests and counter-interests had relegated the concerns and sensitivities of the people of Afghanistan to the periphery and undermined the Geneva Agreements. We welcome the recent initiative of the two super-Powers to end the stalemate and we support any effort that will usher in a broad-based Government and bring about an effective and lasting solution to the problem.*

As the cold war draws to an end and the United Nations is set to play its central role in promoting international peace and co-operation, the time has come for the United Nations to settle the last remaining legacy of the cold war - the issue of Korea's membership in the United Nations. In today's international community, the Republic of Korea is the only country that remains outside the United Nations in spite of its strong desire to become a Member. The Republic of Korea has become an important member of the world community, maintaining diplomatic relations with 143 countries and enjoying full membership in most of the international organizations, including 15 specialized agencies of the United Nations. In our view, the admission of the Republic of Korea to United Nations membership should be determined strictly on the merits of the case and in accordance with the membership criteria set forth in the Charter. The question of the Republic of Korea's membership should not be subjected to extraneous considerations such as the resolution of inter-Korean issues. My delegation therefore strongly supports the admission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations as a Member.

Peace and diplomacy, however, have not prevailed in the Middle East. Just as the world was beginning to trust and appreciate the emerging international order

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* Mr. Sutresna (Indonesia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Tsering, Bhutan)

based on the rule of law, the confidence of the international community was rudely shaken by recent events in the Middle East. The blatant use of force by Iraq to settle its dispute with Kuwait is a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and the basic principles of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and is contrary to all norms of international behaviour. Respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of States are the cardinal principles governing relations among nations. Unless Iraq is made to disgorge its ill-gotten gains through the economic embargo and whatever other means the United Nations considers appropriate, no small State in the world will be safe in the future. And let us not forget that the vast majority of United Nations Members are small States.

The manner in which the Gulf crisis is resolved will determine how the international political order will be maintained in the post-cold-war world. In that context, it was heartening to hear the United Nations speak with one voice when confronted with that great challenge. Equally significant was the first joint crisis-management exercise by the super-Powers. That is manifest in the various Security Council resolutions that have been adopted and which we fully support. At last we have seen the Security Council emerge from the shackles of the cold war to play its role as envisaged by the founding fathers.

(Mr. Tsering, Bhutan)

My country has joined other peace-loving nations of the world in condemning Iraq's aggression and calling for its immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. We do not recognize the Iraqi annexation of the State of Kuwait. We uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait and its legitimate Government of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Amir of Kuwait. We call upon Iraq to abide by the Security Council resolutions and settle its differences with Kuwait by peaceful means through dialogue and negotiation.

The first crisis of the post-cold-war era is a sobering shock. Must the world order so assiduously built over the years disintegrate in one misadventure? This calls for some mechanisms designed not only to settle disputes but also to anticipate and prevent conflicts. In his 1989 report on the work of the Organization, our Secretary-General said:

> "Ffforts to prevent possible conflicts, reduce the risk of war and achieve definitive settlements of disputes, whether long-standing or new, are part and parcel of a credible strategy for peace." (A/44/1, p. 10)

Those wise words merit our unconditional support. We believe the United Nations should play a central role in creating this collective security structure. In this connection, we fully support the proposal by the Foreign Minister of the USSR, Mr. Shevardnadze, to reactivate the work of the Security Council's Military Staff Committee. Such a body would not only enable the United Nations to enforce its decisions but provide a mechanism for preparing and co-ordinating action.

To digress slightly, I wish to express our deep appreciation and admiration for the brilliant address by Mr. Shevardnadze at the current session of the General Assembly. His perceptive and visionary remarks do credit to him and his great leader, President Gorbachev, who through their great statesmanship have done more than anyone else to usher in a new and more humane political order in the world.

(Mr. Tsering, Bhutan)

The saga of the Palestinian people's struggle for justice and freedom continues. For almost three years the intifadah has survived against all odds and become a symbol of the resurgence of Palestinian nationalism. The world cannot afford to ignore it, much less deny it. My country has always supported the right of all nations in the region to live in peace within secure borders. This applies equally to the Palestinian people, who have every right to an independent homeland. In our view, the present Gulf crisis once again underscores the urgent necessity for settling the Palestine question. Unless this is done, the Middle East, with its vast oil reserves, will remain a constant threat to world peace and stability. In this regard, we call for the early convening of an international conference for the settlement of the Palestine question.

The theory of containment and deterrence has lost much of its appeal and relevance. As the paranoia and misconceptions prevalent in the super-Power relations during the cold war have disappeared, the entire perception of their traditional security arrangements has undergone a dramatic change. They are now engaged in a highly constructive dialogue on disarmament, dispelling the threat of a nuclear holocaust. Sadly, however, while the super-Powers' dialogue has entered a productive phase, it is ironic that there should be a drive by many countries to increase their arsenals of war. Apart from the uncertainty over the extent of nuclear arms proliferation, definite evidence of the acquisition of chemical and bacteriological weapons by a large number of countries has emerged. Equally unfortunate is the massive diversion of resources by the developing countries for military expenditure at the cost of the basic needs of their peoples.

The thaw in the cold war and the expected peace dividend offer the opportunity to underscore once again the relationship between disarmament and development. The time is now opportune to reduce defence expenditure and divert the financial and

(Mr. Tsering, Bhutan)

other productive resources to the solution of urgent global problems. We hope the international community will give meaning and substance to the concept of development through disarmament and not use the present uncertainties to restore defence expenditure. In this spirit, we reiterate our call to convene a fourth special session on disarmament.

Many hold the view that the achievements in the political arena have not been matched in the field of economic co-operation. The world economy still displays pervasive uncertainties. The wall that divides the developed and the developing countries is firmly in place. Their relations continue to be affected by severe disparities and inequities. We, however, believe that there is reason not to despair. Developments over the past year have opened up new and exciting opportunities. The increasing co-operation between major Powers, the integration of Eastern European countries into the world economic system and the relatively peaceful international climate have generated a greater willingness to deal with the problems of the current world economic system.

The consensus to convene a World Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil in 1992 and the establishment of the Preparatory Committee indicate a convergence of views among Member States on the vital question of environment. The urgent need for collective action is supported by a great deal of scientific evidence on the diminishing capacity of the environment to sustain life. These environmental challenges are no longer confined to nations or regions but global in scope, threatening the very survival of humanity. Indeed it is only the strength of our resolve to transcend our narrow national interests and act in global unity and harmony that will determine the fate of future generations. We hope the 1992 Conference in Brazil will be a watershed in international collective efforts to repair the damage and redress the ecological imbalances that threaten our fragile planet.

(Mr. Tsering, Bhutan)

The World Summit for Children was a highly significant event, for it was a reaffirmation of our obligations under the United Nations Charter "to save succeeding generations". The Summit was a solemn occasion to rediscover this truth and realign our focus on the needs of the children. It was also a recognition that human resource is both a means and an end to development. The joint commitment reflected in the Summit Declaration provides a concrete step in ensuring the survival and well-being of children as a measure of successful development efforts. May I take this opportunity to commend the dedicated Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, Mr. Grant, for his untiring crusade on behalf of the world's children.

(Mr. Tsering, Bhutan)

My delegation is happy at the outcome of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Paris recently. Although the Programme of Action adopted for the 1990s has not fully met the expectations of the least developed countries, the international community has made a strong commitment to arrest the further deterioration in their socio-economic situation and to reactivate and accelerate growth and development in those countries and to set them firmly on the path of sustained growth. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to urge the donor community to translate its commitments in Paris into concrete action. We have every confidence that the national efforts of the least developed countries, supplemented by adequate financial and technical assistance from the donors, will accelerate economic growth and improve the quality of life of the peoples in the least developed countries by the end of this decade.

The road to development has not been smooth and easy for the Kingdom of Bhutan. One of our main national development objectives is economic self-reliance. In its realization we face not only all the constraints of a least developed country but also the geographical handicap of being landlocked. Our remoteness from the sea adds to the high cost of transportation of all our goods and services. The creation of an internal transport and communications network in our rugged terrain to maintain an effective national link constitutes a formidable challenge. Given our situation, external assistance will thus continue to play a major role in our modernization process, although it is our intention to keep such assistance to the bare minimum.

Here I wish to acknowledge the useful contribution of our development partners, particularly India, Japan, Switzerland, Denmark, Austria, Norway, the United Kingdom, Australia and the Federal Republic of Germany, and various

(Mr. Tsering, Bhutan)

specialized agencies and bodies of the United Nations, particularly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (UNDTCD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in the realization of our development goals. They have played an active part in all aspects of our national life and moved us closer to our objective of economic self-reliance.*

The 1990s is the decade of the future. What is done and left undone now will determine the quality of life in the future and perhaps even the very survival of mankind. Most propitiously, the recent past has seen great forces of reform and rethinking at work in international life. The notion that the United Nations was a theatre of debate rather than consensus, rich in rhetoric and poor in action, has been proved wrong. Even in the most compelling circumstances the United Nations has continued to be the navigating light, however dim, shining in the darkness, guiding mankind's path away from destruction. Multilateralism has provided effective answers to the many ills of our times. The United Nations has now re-emerged as the conscience of the world. It is certainly our best hope for the future. We must do everything possible to preserve and strengthen it for the sake of global peace and security, and for the well-being of all our peoples.

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* The President returned to the Chair.

The meeting was suspended at 11.35 a.m. and resumed at 11.45 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. GEORGE BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the United States of America.

Mr. George Bush, President of the United States of America, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the United States of America, His Excellency Mr. George Bush, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President BUSH: It is really a great privilege to greet you today as we begin what marks a new and historic session of the General Assembly. My congratulations to the Honourable Guido de Marco on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. On a personal note I want to say that, having witnessed the unprecedented unity and co-operation of the past two months, I have never been prouder to have once served within your ranks and never been prouder that the United States is the host country for the United Nations.

Forty-five years ago, while the fires of an epic war still raged across two oceans and two continents, a small group of men and women began a search for hope amid the ruins and they gathered in San Francisco, stepping back from the haze and horror to try to shape a new structure that might support an ancient dream.

Intensely idealistic, and yet tempered by war, they sought to build a new kind of bridge, a bridge between nations, a bridge that might help carry humankind from its darkest hour to its brightest day.

The founding of the United Nations embodied our deepest hopes for a peaceful world. And during the past year we have come closer than ever before to realizing those hopes. We have seen a century sundered by barbed threats and barbed wire give way to a new era of peace and competition and freedom.

(President Bush)

The revolution of 1989 swept the world almost with a life of its own, carried by a new breeze of freedom that transformed the political climate from Central Europe to Central America, and touched almost every corner of the globe. That breeze has been sustained by a now almost-universal recognition of a simple, fundamental truth: the human spirit cannot be locked up for ever. The truth is that people everywhere are motivated in much the same way and people everywhere want much the same thing: the chance to live a life of purpose, the chance to choose a life in which they and their children can learn and grow healthy, worship freely, and prosper through the work of their hands and their hearts and their minds. We are not talking about the power of nations, but the power of individuals: the power to choose, the power to risk, the power to succeed.

This is a new and different world. Not since 1945 have we seen the real possibility of using the United Nations as it was designed - as a centre for international collective security.

The changes in the Soviet Union have been critical to the emergence of a stronger United Nations. The United States-Soviet relationship is finally beyond containment and confrontation, and now we seek to fulfil the promise of mutually shared understanding.

The long twilight struggle that for 45 years has divided Europe, our two nations and much of the world has come to an end. Much has changed over the last two years. The Soviet Union has taken many dramatic and important steps to participate fully in the community of nations, and when the Soviet Union agreed with so many of us here in the United Nations to condemn the aggression of Iraq, there could be no doubt that we had indeed put four decades of history behind us.

(President Bush)

We are hopeful that the machinery of the United Nations will no longer be frozen by the divisions that plagued us during the cold war; that at long last we can build new bridges and tear down old walls; that at long last we will be able to build a new world based on an event for which we have all hoped - an end to the cold war.

Two days from now the world will be watching when the cold war is formally buried in Berlin. And in this time of testing a fundamental question must be asked - a question not for any one nation, but for the United Nations. And the question is this: Can we work together in a new partnership of nations? Can the collective strength of the world community, expressed by the United Nations, unite to deter and defeat aggression? Because the cold war's battle of ideas is not the last epic battle of this century.

(President Bush)

Two months ago, in the waning weeks of one of history's most hopeful summers, the vast, still beauty of the peaceful Kuwaiti desert was fouled by the stench of diesel and the roar of steel tanks. Once again the sound of distant thunder echoed across a cloudless sky. And once again the world awoke to face the guns of August.

But this time the world was ready. The United Nations Security Council's resolute response to Iraq's unprovoked aggression has been without precedent. Since the invasion on 2 August the Council has adopted eight major resolutions setting the terms for a solution to the crisis.

The Iraqi régime has yet to face the facts. But as I said last month: The annexation of Kuwait will not be permitted to stand. This is not simply the view of the United States. It is the view of every Kuwaiti, the Arab League and the United Nations. Iraq's leaders should listen: it is Iraq against the world. Let me take this opportunity to make the policy of my Government clear. The United States supports the use of sanctions to compel Iraq's leaders to withdraw immediately and without condition from Kuwait. We also support the provision of medicine and food for humanitarian purposes, so long as distribution can be properly monitored. Our quarrel is not with the people of Iraq. We do not wish for them to suffer. The world's quarrel is with the dictator who ordered that invasion.

Along with others, we have dispatched military forces to the region to enforce sanctions, to deter and if need be defend against further aggression. We seek no advantage for ourselves. Nor do we seek to maintain our military forces in Saudi Arabia for one day longer than is necessary. The United States forces were sent at the request of the Saudi Government. The American people - and this President - want every single American soldier brought home as soon as this mission is completed.

(President Bush)

Let me also emphasize that all of us here at the United Nations hope that military force will never be used. We seek a peaceful outcome - a diplomatic outcome. And one more thing - in the aftermath of Iraq's unconditional departure from Kuwait, I truly believe there may be opportunities: for Iraq and Kuwait to settle their differences permanently; for the States of the Gulf themselves to build new arrangements for stability; and for all the States and peoples of the region to settle the conflict that divides the Arabs from Israel. But the world's key task - now, first and always - must be to demonstrate that aggression will not be tolerated or rewarded.

Through the United Nations Security Council, Iraq has been judged - fairly judged - by a jury of its peers, the very nations of the Earth. Today the régime stands isolated and out of step with the times, separated from the civilized world not by space but by centuries. Iraq's unprovoked aggression is a throw-back to another era, a dark relic from a dark time. It has plundered Kuwait; it has terrorized innocent civilians; it has held even diplomats hostage. Iraq and its leaders must be held liable for these crimes of abuse and destruction. But this outrageous disregard for basic human rights does not come as a total surprise. Thousands of Iraqis have been executed on political and religious grounds, and even more through a genocidal, poison-gas war waged against Iraq's own Kurdish villagers.

As a world community, we must act - not only to deter the use of inhumane weapons like mustard and nerve gas, but to eliminate the weapons entirely. That is why one year ago I came to the General Assembly with new proposals to banish these terrible weapons from the face of the Earth. I promised that the United States would destroy over 98 per cent of its stockpile in the first eight years of a chemical weapons ban treaty, and 100 per cent - all of them - in 10 years, if all nations with chemical weapons capabilities signed the treaty.

(President Bush)

We have stood by those promises. In June the United States and the Soviet Union signed a landmark agreement to halt production and destroy the vast majority of our stockpiles. Today United States chemical weapons are being destroyed.

But time is running out. This is not merely a bilateral concern. The Gulf crisis proves how important it is to act together - and to act now - to conclude an absolute, world-wide ban on these weapons. We must also redouble our efforts to stem the spread of nuclear weapons, biological weapons and the ballistic missiles that can rain destruction upon distant peoples.

The United Nations can help bring about a new day, a day when these kinds of terrible weapons and the terrible despots who would use them are both a thing of the past. It is in our hands to leave these dark machines behind, in the dark ages where they belong, and to press forward to cap a historic movement towards a new world order and a long era of peace.

We have a vision of a new partnership of nations that transcends the cold war - a partnership based on consultation, co-operation and collective action, especially through international and regional organizations; a partnership united by principle and the rule of law, and supported by an equitable sharing of both cost and commitment; a partnership whose goals are to increase democracy, increase prosperity, increase the peace, and reduce arms.

And as we look to the future the calendar offers up a convenient milestone, a signpost by which to measure our progress as a community of nations. The year 2000 marks a turning-point, beginning not only the turn of the decade, not only the turn of the century, but also the turn of the millennium. And 10 years from now, as the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly begins, you will again find many of us in this Hall, our hair a bit more gray, perhaps, and a little less spring in our walk. But you will not find us with any less hope or idealism, or any less

(President Bush)

confidence in the ultimate triumph of mankind. I see a world of open borders, open trade, and - most importantly - open minds; a world that celebrates the common heritage that belongs to all the world's people, taking pride not just in hometown or homeland, but in humanity itself. I see a world touched by a spirit like that of the Olympics: based not on competition that is driven by fear, but sought out of joy and exhilaration and a true quest for excellence.

(President Bush)

I see a world where democracy continues to win new friends and convert old foes, and where the Americas, North, Central and South, can provide a model for the future of all humankind - the world's first completely democratic hemisphere.

And I see a world building on the emerging new model of European unity; not just Europe, but the whole world - whole and free.

This is precisely why the present aggression in the Gulf is a menace not only to one region's security but to the entire world's vision of our future. It threatens to turn the dream of a new international order into a grim nightmare of anarchy, in which the law of the jungle supplants the law of nations.

That is why the United Nations reacted with such historic unity and resolve, And that is why this challenge is a test that we cannot afford to fail. I am confident that we will prevail. Success, too, will have lasting consequences - reinforcing civilized standards of international conduct, setting a new precedent in international co-operation, brightening the prospects for our vision of the future.

There are 10 more years until the century is out - 10 more years to put the struggles of the twentieth century permanently behind us; 10 more years to help to launch a new partnership of nations. Throughout those 10 years - and beginning now - the United Nations has a new and vital role in building towards that partnership. Last year's session of the General Assembly showed how we can make greater progress towards a more pragmatic and successful United Nations. And, for the first time, the Security Council is beginning to work as it was designed to work.

Now is the time to set aside old and counter-productive debates, procedures, controversies and resolutions. It is time to replace polemic attacks with pragmatic action.

(President Bush)

We have shown that the United Nations can count on the collective strength of the international community. We have shown that the United Nations can rise to the challenge of aggression, just as its founders hoped it would. Now, in this time of testing, we must also show that the United Nations is the place to build international support and consensus for meeting the other challenges that we face.

The world remains a dangerous place. Our security and well-being often depend, in part, on events occurring far away. We need serious international co-operative efforts to make headway on threats to the environment, on terrorism, on management of the debt burden, on the fight against the scourge of international drug trafficking, and on refugees and peace-keeping efforts around the world.

But the world also remains a hopeful place. Calls for democracy and human rights are being reborn everywhere. These calls are an expression of support for the values enshrined in the United Nations Charter. They encourage our hopes for a more stable, more peaceful, more prosperous world.

Free elections are the foundation of democratic government, and can produce dramatic successes, as we have seen in Namibia and Nicaragua. The time has come to structure the role of the United Nations in such efforts more formally. So, today, I propose that the United Nations establish a special co-ordinator for electoral assistance, to be assisted by a United Nations electoral commission comprising distinguished experts from around the world.

As with free elections, we believe that universal United Nations membership - membership for all States - is central to the future of the Organization and to the new partnership that we have discussed. In support of this principle, and in conjunction with United Nations efforts to reduce regional tensions, the United States fully supports United Nations membership for the Republic of Korea. We do

(President Bush)

so without prejudice to the ultimate objective of reunification of the Korean Peninsula, and without opposition to simultaneous membership for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Building on these and other initiatives, we must join together in a new compact - all of us - to bring the United Nations into the twenty-first century. I call today for a major, long-term effort to do this. We should build on the success, the admirable success, of our distinguished Secretary-General - my long-time friend and colleague, and yours - Javier Perez de Cuellar. We should strive to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations.

The United States is committed to playing its part - helping to maintain global security, promoting democracy and prosperity. My Administration is fully committed to supporting the United Nations, and to paying what we are obliged to pay by our commitment to the Charter. International peace and security - and international freedom and prosperity - require no less.

The world must know and understand that from this hour, from this day, from this Hall, we step forth with a new sense of purpose, a new sense of possibilities. We are united, prepared to swim upstream, to march uphill, to tackle the tough challenges as they come - not only as the United Nations, but as the nations of the world united.

Let it be said of the final decade of the twentieth century that this was a time when humankind came into its own, when we emerged from the grit and the smoke of the industrial age to bring about a revolution of the spirit and of the mind, and began a journey into a new day, a new age, and a new partnership of nations.

The United Nations is now fulfilling its promise as the world's parliament of peace. I congratulate you, I support you, and I wish you Godspeed in the challenges ahead.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the United States of America for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. George Bush, President of the United States of America, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. LEVY (Israel) (interpretation from French): Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you, at the outset, on your election to the presidency of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly and to wish you every success. I would also like to congratulate the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, for his continuous and outstanding endeavours in the service of world peace and accommodation among nations.

We live in an era of sweeping aspirations for freedom, liberty, and the establishment of peace among nations. At the same time, it is a period in which tyranny rears its head, trampling cherished values of humanity while grinding into dust the sovereignty of nations.

In Eastern Europe, the fabric of a new spring of nations is being woven before our eyes. In Western Europe, the crystallization of the Community of Europe into a powerful and cohesive alliance of nations continues, transcending borders and unifying hearts and nations. The enlightened leadership of that great democracy - the United States - reaps the fruits of its victory: the ascendancy, across continents, of the values of liberty and respect for humankind.

A widespread perception has held sway for decades, contending that the thawing of hostilities between East and West would usher in the attainment of global peace. Ostensibly, the consecration of this thaw enhanced the prospect that the world was, indeed, on the threshold of an epoch which would render war obsolete. This optimistic supposition failed to take into account the true and feckless nature of some Middle Eastern and Persian Gulf régimes. The proposition also ignored the fact that this violence-prone and conflict-ridden region became, increasingly, a global sieve for the surpluses of arms.

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

Certain States in this region are run by autocratic rulers driven by fanaticism. This combination of destructive capabilities at the disposal of rulers with destructive inclinations has created ominous threats to the peace and security of the region and the world. These are the factors which engendered the crisis in the Persian Gulf.

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

For many years the countries of the world assisted in the military build-up of Iraq. They believed that in so doing they were contributing to the containment of Khomeini's Iran. East and West alike inadvertently created a horrific and dangerous monster.

In 1981 Israel destroyed the Iraqi nuclear reactor. As members know, that action was not universally welcomed. Today, however, the world realizes that the far-reaching military arm of Israel was guided by a far-sighted political outlook. The situation in the region, and even that of mankind as a whole, would have been different had Saddam Hussein been in possession of a nuclear bomb today.

For 10 years the free world continued to shore up and consolidate Saddam Hussain's power. He was provided with quantities of all kinds of weaponry. The Arab countries themselves - including Kuwait - placed at his disposal enormous financial resources to fund the building of his engine of destruction. From Europe and Latin America, from East and West, came the transfer to Iraq's dictator of technological expertise and the means for the development of terrible chemical weapons, which he threatens to use, in accordance with norms of war more brutal and vicious than the laws of the jungle, as he has himself admitted.

Private corporations in the West continued to supply him with the knowledge and technology for his efforts which almost reached fruition: the possession of the nuclear weapon. By their own actions, all these countries contributed to this terrible and pernicious machine which threatens them today.

That megalomaniac tyrant, incapable of weighing his actions rationally, does not subscribe to the logic of balance of terror.

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

That man, who stops at nothing, has already proved to the world his willingness to employ chemical weapons, using them against his own Kurdish countrymen. He has exposed his ruthlessness to the world by sacrificing the lives of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis and Iranians in a futile and nonsensical war which he unleashed against Iran for 8 years. This chilling military might devoid of any morality catapults the world back to the nightmare years of the 1930s and 1940s.

On the eve of his invasion of Kuwait Saddam Hussein threatened to destroy Israel if Israel should attack Iraq or any other Arab country. But he was fully aware that Israel had no intention of attacking Iraq or any other Arab country. As we know, he himself was the one who attacked Iran, and who decimated many of his own people, the Iraqi Kurds. He was the one who invaded Kuwait, who was on the brink of launching an assault and perhaps even of annexing Saudi Arabia and who now threatens to shell and destroy all the oil sources of the Arabian peninsula.

He has trampled upon the sovereignty of nations, and placed the global economy in danger. All the efforts made to achieve global peace, which have already found expression in the rapproachment between nations and political systems, are now overshadowed by a terrible genie which could spew out of the oil wells of the world in pillars of smoke that will eclipse the sun.

At this time, as the General Assembly of the United Nations is in session, Saddam Hussein threatens to attack Israel and bring about its destruction in retaliation for United Nations solutions or resolutions. He cocks a gun at Israel's heart, in the hope of extricating himself from punishment in keeping with international law.

The free world should know that Israel will not sacrifice its security as the price of United Nations decisions aimed at safeguarding their economic well-being and freedom. Israel will know how to defend itself if attacked, and its response

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

will be harsh and painful. This reality, however, does not absolve the international community from the responsibility of taking firm measures to put an end to this régime which is threatening the stability of the entire region and runs the risk of undermining the world economy.

We are witnessing an unfolding drama. The United Nations should not allow this drama to be enshrined in the annals of history as a tragedy.

The latest developments in the Middle East provide us with yet another opportunity to assess and evaluate the Arab-Israeli conflict in the appropriate historical and political light. For decades the underlying causes of this protracted and bitter dispute have stemmed from the refusal of the Arab States, with the exception of Egypt, to recognize the right of Israel to exist. This uncompromising Arab position has been the cause of successive wars imposed on Israel and has manifested itself in venomous anti-Israel propaganda, economic boycotts, acts of terrorism and blatant acts of aggression.

For two generations Arab countries have squandered their natural resources, their wealth and their peoples' well-being in a continuous, all-embracing arms race, with Israel as the target. The awesome toll of this futile and unnecessary undertaking has been and is - but I hope it will not continue to be - the loss of human life, the abandonment of the prospects of development and socio-economic prosperity for the region as a whole and the perpetuation of self-destructive hostility.

Today, a great cry of distress is being heard. From this region of the world, which bestowed upon humanity the Book of Books, the Koran and the New Testament, emanates the cry of humanity and its pleas for mercy, expressed in the prayer of every Jew:

"And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid". (Leviticus, 26:6)

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

At a time when the cold war is ending and being replaced by an ardent desire for co-operation, a period in which the international community has come to regard the toppling of the Berlin Wall as a symbol of a new era in relations between peoples and Governments, the international community can no longer countenance the continued existence of the solid wall of Arab hostility encircling Israel to stifle that only truly democractic country in the Middle East.

Such a state of affairs must no longer be accepted as a foregone conclusion. It is not a law of nature. This blind hostility by Arab Governments towards Israel should not be allowed to fester as an eternal curse.

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

The Iron Curtain is co lapsing in Europe. Can we tolerate the continued existence in the Middle East of a "sand curtain", setting that region apart from a world marching towards peace?

Since Israel achieved its independence in 1948 and was invaded by seven Arab States in an attempt to destroy it, Israel has never ceased extending to those countries the offer of peace. Today more than ever before peace is a vital necessity for all the countries of the region. In that spirit, I appeal once again to the leaders of the Arab countries to settle this protracted dispute through direct negotiations, free from all shackles and pre-conditions.

To advance this process, it would be appropriate to initiate and encourage mutual confidence-building measures. Such measures could induce a gradual reduction in hostilities and tensions and the cessation of hostile rhetoric, belligerence and terrorism. That is the path recently followed by the East and West blocs in achieving the rapprochement that made a significant contribution to reducing the hostilities between the two blocs and led to the collapse of the barriers separating them. A similar process forged the route to the peace agreements between Israel and Egypt.

Should a complete and immediate solution to the dispute prove impossible to achieve, let us build peace step by step. Each step will contribute to the enhancement of mutual understanding, the easing of tensions and the consolidation of good-neighbourly relations. First and foremost, the States of the region should proclaim forthwith the termination of the state of war and should meet, as Israel has proposed many times in the past, in the context of a conference on disarming the Middle East of chemical and other weapons.

Israel extends to its neighbours an offer of broad co-operation to ensure the prosperity and well-being of our peoples and alleviate the suffering of millions of

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

human beings. Israel is prepared to make available to its neighbours the expertise and experience it has acquired, particularly in desalinating sea water and making the deserts flourish. We shall share with our neighbours our experience, our expertise and our technological advances in such fields as solar energy, innovative irrigation techniques and modern agricultural methods, as well as plans for developing road and other communication infrastructures. In so doing we shall meet the challenges of disease, famine and poverty. Together we shall work for the reintegration of the refugees, whose profound misery is the price of the rejection of peace.

If only the Arab states were prepared to foreswear the state of war and embark on the road to peace, they would contribute - I am sure - to finding a solution to the Palestinian problem. In Israel's peace initiative of May 1989, much political and practical thought was given to the ways of grappling with both those challenges. Israel is determined to continue its efforts to ensure the realization of its peace initiative.

In Israel's peace initiative the right has been offered to the Palestinian inhabitants of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district to join as negotiating partners with Israel in determining their destiny and future. This right was never given to the Palestinians by any of the former empires or régimes, including Jordan.

It is the PLO which has been, and continues to be, the obstacle to the fulfilment of this unprecedented opportunity. It is the PLO that not only carries out repeated acts of terrorism against Israeli civilians, but also brutally murders Palestinians. More than 300 Palestinians have been murdered by the PLO in the wake of Israel's peace initiative, in an attempt to impose a reign of fear and terror, using the same methods as the PLO's ally Saddam Hussein.

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

We shall continue to combat terrorism and we reject its perpetrators as interlocutors. But that should not debar the peaceful forces among the Palestinians from joining us forthwith at the negotiating table to further the peace initiative that we have proposed. It is good for them; it is good for us; it is good for the whole region; it is good for the entire world.

These days Israel is adding a new chapter to the epic of its national regeneration. The Soviet Union has unbolted the gates and allowed Jews to return to their ancestral land. A wondrous vision is unfolding before our very eyes: tens of thousands of Jews are regaining their national identity and rejoining their brethren in their homeland.

This historic process is one of the fruits of the transformation taking place in Europe. The ideals of freedom at the basis of respect for human rights and dignity have finally been accepted in the East. Democracy is dawning on the horizon. The Western countries that have adhered to the principles of freedom and democracy have made a significant contribution to this development, as has the firm resolve of successive Presidents of the United States to impart those principles to the peoples of the world.

There has emerged in the Soviet Union a bold, wise and realistic statesman, who has initiated a dramatic turning-point in his country. The walls of hostility between régimes and peoples have finally been dismantled. We are following this course with hope - hope for the Soviet people, for Europe, for ourselves and for mankind as a whole. This transformation has freed liberty and democracy from its chains.

In Israel too we are happy about this transformation, which has enabled our people to return to Zion. We are grateful to the democratic Governments of the world, and especially to Presidents Reagan and Bush, who, by their devotion, have contributed to opening the gates of freedom.

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

The Organization, the community of nations, envisioned as a place of freedom and independence, is overshadowed by a heavy cloud which formed with the passing of the nefarious resolution comparing zionism with racism.

That resolution - which dares to treat as a racist movement the liberation movement of a people, which, more than any other, has suffered from racism - has become one of the most flagrantly racist propositions of modern times. That resolution sullies the Charter of the United Nations.

For several generations, the people of Israel - which proclaimed to humanity the universal message of peace - has devoted its efforts to bringing about the national renaissance on the land of Israel. The word shalom - peace - represents the essence of all that has been revealed to the people of Israel. It constitutes also its message to humanity. The attainment of peace is the loftiest aspiration of every Jewish person. It is an integral part of his daily prayers. It is the word used both for greeting and farewell. When we meet each other we shake hands and say shalom, meaning peace.

We say that it is the Creator of the universe Himself who makes peace reign. It is even one of His glories. It is written: "He who makes peace in the heavens, may He make peace upon us."

This longing for peace has always characterized the people of Israel. And it is with this ethos, today as in ancient times, that Israel's hand is extended in peace to all nations. Israel is one of the few countries against which war has been waged continuously since its creation. Israel must assiduously safeguard its security and its future, with the same degree of resolve and determination with which it safeguards its principles and values and strives to achieve peace.

In the spirit of Yom Kippur, this day of forgiveness, the holiest of the holy

(Mr. Levy, Israel)

days for the Jewish people, let our prayer be raised from this rostrum: May the Lord give strength unto His people - and to all mankind. May the Lord bless all peoples, including the people of Israel, and give them peace.

With this prayer in our holy language, I now draw to a close my statement, my remarks and my appeal, in the hope that the appeal will be heeded and will lead to a new era of construction, an era of confidence, of understanding, expectation and co-operation among all peoples, particularly the peoples of the Middle East.

Ms. WILDE (New Zealand): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency at a time when the Organization stands at the threshold of opportunity and faces complex challenges. What is true for the Organization is true, too, for my country. In New Zealand 1990 marks 150 years since the foundations of our nation State were laid.

The basic compact, the Treaty of Waitangi, was signed in 1840 by the tribal chiefs of the country they referred to as Aotearoa, and by representatives of the British Crown on behalf of the new settlers in the country they called New Zealand. It was an agreement to live and work in co-operation. There are still significant challenges to our partnership - to honour broken promises and to redress historical wrongs. We are working for a society where ethnic and cultural differences are valued as strengths rather than rejected as weaknesses. We are trying to put our house in order.

The end of the cold war presents the United Nations with the opportunity in 1990 to put the global house in order, to make a fresh and reinvigorated commitment to the world's security. The Secretary-General reminded us in his annual report that a comprehensive approach to security is the very essence of the existence of the United Nations. New Zealand vigorously endorses that view. A balanced and

(Ms. Wilde, New Zealand)

integrative approach to security - acknowledgement of our common security needs and of the role of the United Nations - is central to the protection of the interests of small countries. We believe that small countries have much to offer the United Nations. Many of the world's citizens live in small countries which have modest aspirations, which do not wish to engage in wars, and which cannot force their views on others. Indeed, the major security threats to our country and its immediate region, the islands of the South Pacific, are not military but rather environmental and economic.

New Zealand and the rest of the South Pacific are fortunate in that we are removed from areas of conflict or significant international tension. But we are by no means isolated. Global, economic, political and environmental developments can often impact sharply on small countries which are distant from the epicentre of world events. A commitment to the common security needs of the global community is important at a time like this when we all face the crisis in the Persian Gulf.

New Zealand has unreservedly condemned Iraq's aggression against a small neighbour and the repugnant actions taken against foreign nationals. The people most affected, of course, are the Kuwaitis themselves, who are suffering from an attempt by an aggressive neighbour to extinguish their country's independent existence. However, also experiencing immediate anguish are the many thousands of foreign nationals caught up in the crisis, especially those detained against their will. There are only a handful of New Zealanders amongst them, but the small number does not diminish the significance of their plight for the Government and people of New Zealand. We consider the continued holding of hostages to be an outrage and we urge Iraq to release all those detained and to respect immediately all the resolutions of the Security Council.*

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* Mr. Thompson (Fiji), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Ms. Wilde, New Zealand)

Of course, a fundamental concern remains the dreadful possibility of a war that could escalate rapidly to encompass many countries and perhaps spread to other regions. The whole world has an interest in ensuring that does not occur and that a resort to armed conflict is avoided.

In that process, respect for the principles and values of the United Nations - and the use of its mechanisms by all of us - is essential. New Zealand indicated at an early stage to the United Nations Secretariat its readiness to contribute to any operations in the Gulf region under United Nations auspices. I confirm that offer today. In particular, New Zealand has demonstrated willingness and ability to contribute to United Nations peace-keeping operations. We have committed ourselves to the supply of food and medical assistance, and our aircraft have ferried some of the refugees from the area back to their home countries - Pakistan and the Philippines in particular.

The Gulf crisis has illustrated vividly the potential for the United Nations to provide a swift, effective response to regional conflict. The achievement to date has been considerable.

This is the first opportunity for New Zealand to state its view of the Gulf crisis in the framework of the Organization, and I would like to add a cautionary note to what other speakers have said. We all understand the implications of a further escalation of the Gulf crisis. Against that background, it is vital that the support of all United Nations Members be sustained for collective responses. Care must be taken never to presume too much. It is after all the United Nations Members as a whole who, in Article 24:

> "confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security".

That act of conferral underpins all else.

(Ms. Wilde, New Zealand)

The actions in the past weeks in the Security Council in regard to that whole issue have truly historical significance. They establish precedents for practical responses to other and different regional conflicts or disputes. All of us - Security Council permanent members, non-permanent members, and non-Security Council members - are, I think, sufficiently clear about the importance of what is currently being achieved.

But we need to give more thought to how that process is undertaken. As a first step, there is room for improving among us all, and, irrespective of our place in the scheme of things, the sharing of information, perceptions and conclusions about how United Nations responses should best be formulated. Such a process is going to be indispensable in the longer run to achieving our shared purpose, big country and small, within the Organization. Our collective response to the present threats to global stability depends on a background of substantial achievment at and since the last session of the General Assembly.

The independence of Namibia, the signs of political progress in South Africa, the constructive steps towards a settlement in the Western Sahara, and the progress towards resolution of the situation in Cambodia together comprise a significant list of achievements. The gathering consensus among the five permanent members of the Security Council, and the new spirit that animates the relations between the super-Powers, are great achievements. But it is the tasks which remain that will provide the real test of the United Nations's capabilities and of what the future will hold for us all.

That brings me back once again to common security. At a time when there has been so much hope expressed - and yet we still face such daunting problems - there is a need for increased commitment to strengthening the threads of our common security. Many hope that we are now witnessing the emergence of a new order. It is certainly time for it.

(Ms. Wilde, New Zealand)

But to achieve it we must put away the old ways of thinking, the old ways of acting. We need a change of attitude towards what constitutes security. We need a new respect for our rapidly diminishing natural resources. We need an acknowledgment that human rights and freedoms depend not only on resolutions passed at international meetings, but on the implementation of decisions that will facilitate real economic choices for countries.

For many nations, particularly those of the South, the problems of trade, indebtedness and economic underdevelopment are enduring. Unless there are greater moves towards the liberalization of trade, there will be no real progress. In the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations is nearing the deadline for its completion. New Zealand is pinning its hopes on its success. The prospects of new trade opportunities for all cannot be overrated.

This represents a last chance for GATT. In 40 years, the system has failed to produce an equitable trading environment for the majority of its members. In the area of agricultural trade, which is of principal concern to my country, GATT has been a singular disappointment. It has condoned protectionism and subsidization, principally by the major economic Powers, which have over the years corroded economic opportunity and potential for commodity-trading countries.

At a time when the idea of burden-sharing is gaining currency, we should reflect upon the fact that the burden of protectionism in several major industrialized economies has been carried by other countries. It is even more instructive to reflect that agricultural support and subsidization inside the countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development was estimated for 1989 at $245 billion - six times the total of resources transferred by those countries to developing countries in that same year.

(Ms. Wilde, New Zealand)

That is the kernel of the issue. Without a substantial revision of policy attitudes towards common economic security among the influential Powers, including the Permanent Five and their immediate partners, the idea of a new order that bears promise and advantage to all will remain an empty slogan. The smaller, less powerful countries in our world will not be convinced otherwise.

The GATT outcome in December is the litmus test. The principal adjustments in that trade round will have to come from those more powerful economies whose influence has shaped, or mishaped, the trade rules for nearly half a century. At this very moment, those self-same countries have in their grasp the opportunity to effectively manage regional political security in our world in better and more imaginative ways than have ever been contemplated previously. Resource transfers are needed not only to address the endemic problems of economic underdevelopment, but also to assist in the attack on what has been only too recently acknowledged - environmental degradation.

That is another area in which the interests of some countries are inextricably involved with the actions of others. It is an area where the embracing of the idea of common security is essential for survival. New Zealand's own immediate neighbours in the South Pacific provide ample demonstrations of that. Far from being a vast, uninhabited sea, the great South Pacific Ocean contains tens of thousands of islands, over 1,000 distinct languages, and a great variety of different cultures. But many of those are small islands, atoll countries whose very existence is threatened by the sea-level rise predicted if greenhouse gas emissions are not contained by industrialized countries.

The ecosystem of our marine environment is also threatened from the outside by the wanton stripping of resources and the dumping of wastes. The environmental

(Ms. Wilde, New Zealand)

security of the South Pacific is totally interdependent with that of the wider Asia-Pacific region and the global community. To preserve our environmental security we must have sustained political commitment to making hard decisions.

The United Nations has just begun preparations for the vitally important 1992 Conference on Environment and Development. New Zealand intends playing a full and constructive part, and our Government will be working with our non-governmental organizations to bring our country's perspective to the Conference.

(Ms. Wilde, New Zealand)

Assistance must be given to the developing countries, in particular to enable them to repair the environmental damage aggravated by poverty and to help them avoid reliance on environmentally destructive technologies. The General Assembly has a critical role in carrying forward the environmental debate, forming decisions upon which Governments can act.

The achievement last year of a significant resolution on driftnet fishing and the actions which have followed it provide ample proof of what can be achieved. We need to build upon that. Urgent measures must be taken in a number of areas, particularly to prevent climate change and preserve the earth's biodiversity.

Even though it has undoubtedly been triggered by a crisis situation, the increasing recognition of the need for international co-operation to preserve the environment is an encouraging sign of global support for new sorts of security policies. However, in the final analysis our common security also depends on maintaining and strengthening world peace.

We all welcome the new opportunities offered by the end of the cold war. There has undoubtedly been major progress over the last year, in the conclusion of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, the agreement in principle on reductions in strategic nuclear weapons and the negotiations on conventional stability in Europe. But the most remarkable symbol of the end of the cold war is of course that from this week onwards there will be only one German delegation at the United Nations. The peaceful reunification of the German nation is a momentous achievement. We support unreservedly the efforts of the two major Powers and other countries involved in those processes. We look to a world ruled by peace and stability rather than by military confrontation.

(Ms. Wilde, New Zealand)

But, while we look to the future with greater hope, we must also do so without illusions. The crisis in the Gulf region reminds us all too starkly that the maintenance of peace requires a real commitment. We cannot assume that peace will happen as the inevitable result of historical trends. All of us - great Powers and small - share a responsibility to ensure that new opportunities become significant achievements.

Up till now the vigorous pursuit of conventional arms dealing has played a major part in the creation of conflicts. Governments cannot escape their responsibility to halt this proliferation. We in New Zealand are committed to playing a constructive and imaginative role in the disarmament process and in participating in achieving real security in our region and internationally.

New Zealand's commitment to peace-keeping is reflected in our involvement in the Middle East in the United Nations truce supervision operation and in the Iran-Iraq observer group, as well as in the non-United Nations peace-keeping operation in the Sinai. New Zealand police assisted with the transition to independence in Namibia. In our own region, we recently provided facilities to help with the negotiation and reconciliation of the dispute over the island of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea.

An important contribution made by the countries of our region to the global nuclear disarmament process has been the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone, endorsed overwhelmingly by the General Assembly last year. The Treaty complements the nuclear-free policies which New Zealand has adopted domestically. Two permanent members of the Security Council have given their formal commitment to this initiative by signing the relevant protocols of the Treaty. Two others have given assurances that their actions are not inconsistent with the Treaty's provisions.

(Ms. Wilde, New Zealand)

We urge all the nuclear-weapon States to make a formal commitment by signing the protocols to the Treaty.

The establishment of a South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone has thrown into even sharper contrast the way France continues to test its nuclear weapons, in defiance of the wishes of the countries of the region. Our protests against testing by a nuclear Power in the South Pacific, outside its metropolitan territory, have been ignored. It is intolerable that a region which is committed to nuclear-free principles should be used as a test site for the development of nuclear-weapon technology. For a number of years New Zealand and Australia have sponsored draft resolutions in this Assembly calling for an end to the testing of all nuclear weapons. We shall be sponsoring such a draft resolution again this year.

More than any other single measure, a comprehensive test ban would help slow down the nuclear arms race. We ask the permanent members of the Security Council to respond to the overwhelming demand of the Assembly for the early achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

We share the concern of many Members of the Organization about the possible spread of nuclear weapons to areas of tension such as the Middle East, North Asia or the Korean peninsula. The Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is a vital part of the process of global nuclear disarmament. In this context, we welcomed the widespread support evident at the recent Review Conference for stronger safeguards to restrict further the possible spread of nuclear weapons. It was a matter of great regret to us that it was not possible to have these and other important gains made by the Review Conference formally adopted in a Final Document.

(Ms. Wilde, New Zealand)

It is imperative to take other follow-up action to ensure that those gains are not now lost. It is most frustrating that there has been so little progress on banning nuclear testing, which we see as an important part of the Non-Proliferation Treaty bargain. Nevertheless, the stakes are too high to place this Treaty at risk.

One other aspect of disarmament that is currently the cause of considerable interest in our region is chemical weapons destruction. The decision by the United States and the Soviet Union to destroy most of their stocks of chemical weapons is welcome. Less welcome has been the United States decision to use an atoll in the Pacific Ocean for the destruction of some of its stocks. We certainly understand the need to destroy in situ where possible and look forward to the day when existing stocks in our region are no more. But, along with other South Pacific countries, we are concerned that our region must not be viewed as a convenient disposal area far from the crowded cities of the countries which created the armaments. It is the clear view of our region that there should be no further transfer to the Pacific from outside of chemical weapon stocks for destruction. We have therefore welcomed the assurance to this end given to the South Pacific Forum by the United States. We shall continue to resist the idea of our region being used as a testing ground for nuclear weapons or for the dumping or disposal of nuclear or toxic waste.

The threshold of challenge and of opportunity for the United Nations obliges us all to ensure that our Organization is equal to new tasks. The system in many aspects reflects another world and another time. In 40 years new and significant players have become active in our world community of nations and their position in the scheme of things does need to be better acknowledged. Old enmities have subsided; divided countries are reuniting. The many smaller countries ponder how their interests are now best preserved in this scene of unprecedented change.

(Ms. Wilde, New Zealand)

It is necessary to have a system that better reflects a comprehensive view of our world's security, that allows clear decisions and, most importantly, that encourages faithful observance of agreed conventions. The General Assembly must strive for that, and we must all bear in mind the final beneficiaries of our actions - our children.

At a time when the United Nations is drawing attention to the needs of the children of the world, it is worth reminding ourselves that it is neither the technology nor the resource that is missing in the search to integrate environmental and developmental needs, to create a commonwealth of security for the next generation. What is missing is the political will. We all know that the bizarre reality is that solutions to the real and compelling needs of children, which have been discussed here in the past few days, could be found by reducing the bloated arms budgets of the world.

At this time of such great hope - and such great peril - perhaps we should also remember that those who will inherit our political bequests have simple needs. As we make decisions, choose to act or choose not to act, I would ask the question in the language of the Maori of Aotearoa, the language of my son: "He aha te taonga o Te Ao Hou?" - "What is the treasure of the new dawn?" And the answer is obvious: "Nga mokopuna, nga mokopuna, nga mokopuna" - "It is the children, it is the children".

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.